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ABSTRACT

The role of religious and secular rituals in the mediation of conflicting goals and the socialization of students into harmonious unity is analyzed in the context of a Catholic high school in the Midwest. Data were gathered by a participant-observer who attended classes and extracurricular activities, conducted formal interviews, and informally observed school life throughout the building. Two rituals were examined: the first all-school mass of the 1981-82 school year and the homecoming spirit assembly. Both rituals removed students from normal time (daily classroom routine) and placed them in special time (an all-school assembly), heightening the symbolic impact of the ceremonies. Visual, musical, and verbal symbols were emphasized. The mass stressed that belief and action is eventually rewarded; the small become great; and the last, first. Although the homecoming court illustrated the social competition of schools and distinguished winners and losers, differences and inequalities were banished in the form of activities and in the wearing of costumes on spirit day. Both rituals served to release the social structural tensions that divide students by establishing egalitarian spirit among members. Thus, while classrooms remain the sphere of formal authority, all-school rituals help students develop emotional ties. (KC)

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Ritual Resolution of Ideological Tensions in a Parochial High School

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Ritual Resolution of Ideological Tensions in a Parochial High School

Socialization in complex organizations defies simple analysis. The questions What is taught and What is learned in schools are partially answered with analyses of the social relations of schooling (Jackson, 1968; Hargreaves, 1967), curriculum ideology (Anyon, 1979; Apple, 1979), occupational socialization (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), and the reproduction of patriarchy (Kelly & Nihlen, 1982), to name a few. Much has been learned about different aspects of schooling, but Wexler (1982) criticizes these efforts in their reliance on a "mirror" metaphor for the school/society relation. Educational research has attended only to direct links of school with social structural features. A critical perspective requires an examination of how meanings are encoded, made powerful, and given the appearance of "natural" (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Wexler suggests we must analyze school symbols and structures as one would a text or narrative to further our understanding of the creation of cultural meanings by participants.

Goffman (1976) proposes through "microecological" examinations of human behavior to provide depictions of broader divisions and oppositions of social structure. In his study of conventional male and female postures in photographs, he produces a penetrating analysis

of sexual communication and "socialization." Mechling (1981) builds on this foundation:

> Culture is communication, and the learning of the most basic structures and codes of a culture takes place in communication exchanges much more indirect and much more subtle than direct instruction. (p. 157)

If we are to understand contemporary socialization we must examine indirect, subtle communications. Thus we are led to the world of symbols, myths, and rituals. This is the first assumption of this paper.

Secondly, it is assumed that the meaning system, which these symbols eventually point to, are constructed of oppositional principles. Human thought in language, literature, myth, and sociology follows rules. The rules involve meaning constructed through binary oppositions (Levi-Strauss, 1963). "Good" is partly understood through the existence of "evil"; "water" defined through "land"; "hot" is meaningful in distinction from "cold"; "female" is necessary to define and oppose "male."

In this vein Varenne (1977) shows how American culture in a midwestern town is mainly defined by the opposition and unity of "community" and "individuality." Similarly, in a public high school, friendship and fairness are the oppositions which participants use to order their definitions of the trials of student teaching (Varenne & Kelly, 1977). Friendship and fairness are situational concretizations of the more abstract community/individualism distinction.

This article will make use of the community/individualism opposition in exploring the socialization of high school students into the sacred and secular norms and attitudes of a parochial high school. If individualism and student differences are seen as antithetical to the unity in Christian beliefs and school spirit, yet necessary to the competitive meritocratic notion of schooling, the school must find ways to periodically "resolve" these conflicting aspects of school life.

This paper examines two school rituals which invoke symbols and myths to re-assert the communal school view. Both rites take place at the beginning of the year. The rite involving sacred symbols and meaning system was the first all-school mass of the 1981-82 school year. The secular rite was the homecoming spirit assembly; homecoming is a time in the school year to gear up the school spirit and economy for another two semesters (Burnett , 1981).

Thus this paper examines how one school handles structural and ideological conflict which all school organizations must do (Swidler, 1979; Metz, 1978). The conflict in a religious-based school centered in the dilemma between the goal of establishing a just society through interdependent, altruistic, trusting students and an effective school with a good reputation and independent, competitive, motivated students. The paper emphasizes the role of ritual in the mediation of conflicting goals and the socialization of students into the harmonious unity (if only temporarily) presented in the myth of Christian love and school spirit. Finally,

the paper examines the kinds of legitimizing messages in the school rituals and myths.

Methods of Research

The data I present in the next sections is based upon field-work in St. Anne's High School located in Port Gilbert, a midwestern city of 100,000.[1] From January to June and August to November 1981 I was a participant observer at St. Anne's. In addition to attending classes and conducting formal interviews, I attended extracurricular events and informally observed school life in the main office, girls' bathrooms, library, and teachers' lounge. I shadowed students and became a part of different student groups.

St. Anne's is a coeducational institution founded by the Dominican Sisters of Port Gilbert in 1906. It was originally an all-girls school and admitted boys in 1923. The enrollment was 1,050 in 1980 and the tuition was $1,100.

St. Anne's had a positive reputation in Port Gilbert for producing educated, competent students. Its reputation was partly established through local businesses' satisfaction in the hiring of its graduates, through its policies of closed campus and a dress code ensuring a neat, organized appearance to the public, and through its status as a private school. Its students were viewed by their public school counterparts as "snobby rich kids."

Port Gilbert is a city whose history has been generally shaped by its many industries, truck-farming, and labor supplied by waves of immigrant groups. It has ethnic and racial enclaves and a

small-town view of itself despite racial and economic problems of any big city. It is a conservative community, suspicious of change and outsiders.

Drama and Ritual in Social Life

> Dramatization is the communication strategy typically employed by solidarity groups in order to maintain their highly organized, but all the more vulnerable, definition of the situation. (Young, 1965:3).

This notion of dramatic communications has been consistently applied to the analysis of initiation ceremonies into a sex group (Van Gennep, 1960; Bettelheim, 1954; Young, 1965; Turner, 1979; Mechling, 1981). But it has not been applied to other solidarity groups such as schools whose cohesiveness rests upon ethnic, religious, or social class commonalities and agreements.[2]

Dramatization is a broad term which includes ritual, one form of dramatic presentation. Dramatic presentations are communications usually through symbols and invariant practices or form. What is distinct about ritual dramatizations are the symbols and the activeness of the participants. As Varenne (1981) notes, everyone participates in a ritual; everyone creates and re-creates its meaning; the audience itself is performing.

Following Geertz (1973) I define a symbol as a tangible formulation of a notion, an abstraction from experience fixed in perceptible forms; concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgments, longings, or beliefs. A symbol is "any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception--the conception is the symbol's 'meaning.'" (p. 91)

Ritual has generally come to mean the performing of external gestures without inner commitment to the ideas and values being expressed (Douglas, 1970:1). Ritual generally means empty ritual. However, anthropologists (e.g., Douglas) define it as symbolic communication. Kapferer (1981) regards ritual as a

> complex of symbols and symbolic actions, unquestionable and unquestioning. Above all, they constitute ideas as being in a dominant relation to action, and also as determinant of action. Ideas and action organized in ritual form receive a certain 'sanctity,' and through the course of ritual are endowed with added force in the nonritualized world for which they are understood to have practical relevance. (p. 264)

Geertz (1965), Durkheim (1965) and Goffman (1976) remark that rituals are both representations of the world and models for action in the world. Rituals also address key social structural tensions (Gluckman, 1962).

Rituals are multi-faceted, multi-functioning communications. Rituals are often a way for the tensions which arise from the demands and limitations of social structures to be released (Turner, 1979; Gluckman, 1962). Bateson (1958) describes the ritual in which men dress and act as women and women as men. In the activities which ensue, both sexes demean what they are not, exaggerate the typical behaviors of the opposite sex and also, re-affirm their normal sex role behavior and perspective. Rituals confirm social identity (Schwartz & Merten, 1974; Vizedom, 1976). Gluckman (1962) argues that true rituals "resolve" or address the social structural tensions from which they arise. Thus, rituals can point to key areas of conflict in social organizations.

"Resolve" is used in Miller's (1979) sense of a temporary mediation or highlighting of the conflict for members to consider. Turner's (1969) "communitas" is a temporary unity of people whose normal social structural positions separate or divide them. Social structural limitations and categories inevitably produce tensions through some repressed characteristics.

Research on schools increasingly focuses on the dilemma producing paradoxes inherent in American culture and institutions (Varenne & Kelly, 1977; Berlak & Berlak, 1981). The conflicts in schools are expressed in different forms. Some researchers see cultural conflict (Spindler, 1974); others see conflict of institutional goals (Metz, 1978). This paper examines the conflict of St. Anne's in its own definition of itself.

Roman Catholicism offers an ideal vision of the world exemplified in the Gospel values, love God and love one's neighbor. When all people can do this, a just society, heaven on earth, so to speak, will exist. As long as selfishness, greed, self-interest, self-aggrandizement prevail, the ideal society is still far away.

At the high school level Catholicism becomes a community spirit uniting members of the school. There is an openness to others and a general caring for other members which distinguishes St. Anne's from its public school counterparts. If kinship is "diffuse, enduring solidarity" (Schneider, 1969), the St. Anne's community can be described as partaking of kinship-like ties. The philosophy of St. Anne's established its overall orientation clearly:

> The faculty of St. Anne's affirms that education is a primary means of carrying out Christ's mission to teach love of God and love of neighbor, thereby building a just society. To accomplish this, we, in cooperation with the parents and the students, strive to provide an education that includes a commitment to justice, an emphasis on the faith life and moral development of the student, a concern for the individual need of the learner, and an atmosphere which fosters concern and respect for self and one another. We believe that our educational effort should provide opportunities to achieve a mastery of basic skills; to develop a critical sense which reflects on self, on society and its values; and to acquire decision making skills.

Another aspect of the kinship or community was presented in freshman orientation where a prayer service explicitly stated: "We need others--to give to us and for us to give to them." The half day involvement of seniors and staff in welcoming and giving advice to the freshmen about high school life put this abstract code of conduct into practice.

Kinship and community involve altruism, placing group needs above individual ones, a certain amount of egalitarianism, in that all people are equally important. In the ideal community, self-interest is modulated by thinking of others. At the beginning of the second semester the principal wrote the following in a faculty bulletin to reinforce a particular motivation among the faculty.

> I ask that you all make a conscious effort to be supportive and encouraging to our fellow workers and students. The old adage, if you have nothing good to say about a person, say nothing at all, <u>is really not enough</u>. We must be willing to call forth that good in each other and to be channels whereby the other can exercise his/her goodness.

Thus education at St. Anne's was within the context of a conception of a general order of existence (Geertz, 1973:90) which

included a belief in movement toward a just society, a belief in the future being better, egalitarian membership, and caring for others. This was the ideal toward which St. Anne's strove. These were not just theoretical statements; many students commented on the caring and closeness of people toward each other at the school.

In reality, St. Anne's was not only a community striving to be just but also a school situated in a stratified society. Inequalities of social stratification permeated its corridors and classrooms. Some students were from wealthy families and families of high status in Port Gilbert. That notoriety favorably affected the attention and treatment they received in the school in ways not unsimilar to what Hollingshead (1949) reported.

Also at odds with the creation of a cohesive community is the structure of schooling itself. Schools have been historically used as ladders of upward mobility, not places of class or ethnic solidarity. Parsons (1956) and Dreeben (1968) argue that school organization rightly contributes to the development of competitive and independent traits in students. Schools increasingly promote, even demand, individualism (Carlson, 1982).

The "dilemma producing paradox" (Varenne & Kelly, 1976: 603) at St. Anne's is community versus individualism. As a Christian school it strives toward a vision of justice, egalitarianism, and community. It attempts to build interdependence among people. As a school it promotes individual competition. If it is to fulfill its meritocratic functions, it must reward the highest achievements in academics and

in extracurriculars. Differential achievements are associated with social class and racial backgrounds. St. Anne's Catholic mission to build a just society runs up against its own reputation and continuity as a good school in an unequal, individualistic society.

How can it teach its students to respect and care for everyone equally when its own structure reinforces higher and lower statuses? How does it resolve the conflict between what it holds for ideals and what it does in educational practice?

Ritual Resolutions

In both the religious and secular realms of school activities, St. Anne's used ritual and myth to "resolve" at least temporarily the tensions which arise from the conflicts and repressions of daily life. In both religious and secular rituals, the school's unity and conception of its general order of existence were strengthened. In the religious realm Christian love and justice as the path was reaffirmed. In the extracurricular realm school spirit was the rallying point which temporarily dispersed differential statuses and achievements.

The starting point for ritual is distinguishing normal time (e.g., daily classroom routine) from out-of-normal time (special time). The removal from "normal time" frees the participants from the normal pragmatic modes of thinking and acting (Leach, 1976). Mechling (1981) maintains that ceremony set aside in time and space is sure to heighten its symbolic impact.

The removal of the participants from normal time and normal meaning systems was accomplished by the adjournment of classes and the assembling of the entire school body in the gym. The fact that the normal school day of seven class periods was changed and people physically changed their location in separate classes to being altogether in the gym communicated that something different, apart from the normal life routine would happen. Upon arriving in the gym, decorations further distinguished this other time and prepared the mind to receive different kinds of communications. There were colored cloths hanging over the railings which separated the bleachers from the gym floor. There was a large yellow banner with a huge hand opened in a giving gesture. From the center of this giving hand rose a red heart. The gym floor was covered by a beige tarpaulin, thus transforming its normal athletic appearance and use. There was a long table at one end of the gym, covered with a white cloth and candles. There were two small groups of chairs near each end of the table. Near one group of chairs was a microphone. By one end of the table there was another microphone. All of these artifacts and their arrangement communicated to the arriving people what kind of ritual this would be. The covered floor, colored cloths and banner and table draped in white cloth were the familiar preparations, the setting of the scene for a mass.

The mass rite has a distinct form consisting of three parts. Although readings, homily, and the music change, most of the mass is

invariant and thus predictable to the participants.

This first all school mass of the 1981-82 school year had as its theme Give Good Gifts, the theme for that school year. The banner with the open hand from which came love, the best gift, was a visual representation of the theme. The readings of the mass centered on the theme the last shall be first and the first last, which in parable form is that shrubs will become trees and trees shrubs. The liturgy council members pantomimed this message in a few contemporary applications. One scene involved a big car greedily pushing its way to a gas pump and taking most of the gas, so little was left for the unassuming small car which had been pushed behind the gas-guzzler. Another scene depicted a power-monger ruthlessly removing people who obstructed his rise to total control. The real world problems of injustice in disbursement of rewards, possessions, power were presented dramatically and through the reading.

The resolution involved a belief that in the future things would be different. Those who were now first would later be last. Therefore continuing to act on one's Christian principles of loving even greedy individuals was rational based on one's belief in the ultimate existence of a different order and one's role in helping to create that order on earth. The belief that there was something better allowed one to act according to one's Christian norms when confronted with injustice.

The ritual circumstances of being taken out of normal time, of having a mood created through visual, musical, and verbal symbols, of seeing the pantomiming of the tensions, the suggestion of the resolution, the "fit" of that resolution with an ideal world worked together to create a motivation to try to act on Christian norms. Knowing injustice existed, but believing a better world was possible and desirable, and seeing one's own actions as instrumental in bringing about an ideal world, one resolved the tension through following Christ's example. Part of this resolution was the belief that such Christian actions would be rewarded at some time. Christ's way was a mythic and temporary mediation between the ideal order and reality (Levi-Strauss, 1978).

The other part of this resolution was building on the goodness in the simple, in the unassuming, in the quiet. The cards given out to everyone at communion had a mustard seed taped on them, with the words "The shrubs will become trees, and the trees shrubs." Below the mustard seed were the words, "The gift of a mustard seed is sufficient." This last statement referred to both the innate talents individuals possessed, which were gifts and the gifts people gave to one another. In both circumstances, smallness did not mean insignificance. The potential of greatness was inherent in small seeds. It was what one made of the small seed. If it was cherished and nourished, the small would become great. If the small was not cultivated, however, it would amount to nothing. Thus, part of the mediation between smallness and greatness, present and

future, was action, cultivation, nourishment. For students whose small talents were not immediately recognizable next to more extensive talents of others, the answer lay in belief in Christ's message and action to cultivate one's talents. Belief and action would eventually be rewarded.

Another example of a "resolution" was provided in the priest's homily at the Lenten mass in the 1980-81 school year. Using the Christian death-leads-to-life symbolism explicitly, he talked of the problem of bad moods and bad times in one's life. These could be seen, he said, as deaths. Death, we know through Christ's death and resurrection and in the death and rebirth cycle of nature, was necessary for life. So these "down" periods were necessary for new, brighter life to come forth. Here again the resolution between the ideal world where we all can see the positive aspects of ourselves, see and act on our strengths and the real world of hardships, 'bummers' and bad moods was seeing the two through a Christian perspective, that is, seeing the bad as a necessary precursor to renewed life and goodness. Through this metaphorical view of hardship, trials were made understandable and rational and thus, endurable.

If love, following Christ's example, was the mediation between ideal community and real inequality of individuals in daily life, on the secular level of school extracurriculars "school spirit" was the myth which mediated.

Homecoming Spirit Assembly

This conflict was a secular version of the ideal world/real world described above. On one hand was the idea that everyone belonged to the school; everyone was an equally important member whose presence and contribution was necessary and deserved recognition. All people had talents, were friendly, good students. In reality, however, some students had better looks, more personality, more academic capacity, a higher status family background or more money which gave them a decided edge in gaining friends and recognition in high school. The election of the homecoming court made clear the social competition of schools and distinguished winners and losers. The spirit assembly occurred temporally between the coronation of the king and queen and the colors assembly, which honored the court and the team in front of the whole school. Both the coronation and the colors assembly emphasized the inequalities of student status. Some were higher and most were lower. The higher status students were honored and shown to be higher by being on stage and paraded and applauded by the assembled student body. The spirit assembly occurred in-between these two social structural events, balanced the individual status with community by making everyone temporarily equal and united.

Homecoming at St. Anne's was the major annual celebration which involved the whole school. Burnett (1969) is accurate in her analysis of homecoming as a priming time for all school organizations; it gets school spirit flowing and organizations alive and functioning.

A senior boy said, "School spirit is the highest at homecoming."

A good six weeks prior to the homecoming week, meetings and planning ha already begun in earnest. The actual four days of events somewhere between late September and late October would end up touching everyone in the school--in preparing for, participating in, or at the minimum, watching the festivities.

Homecoming was the welcoming back to the home playing field of the football team that had been defending the school's (and the community's) honor on others' turf for at least one or two weekends. At St. Anne's that was the core of the celebration, yet it provided a time for school members to work together, to compete together, to have fun together, and to get to know each other in the process.

The Student Activities Committee (SAC) decided upon the nature and order of the activities generally following traditional guidelines: all-school liturgy, king and queen coronation, spirit day, spirit day assembly, colors day, all-school cook-out, pep assembly, parade, game and dance. For three weeks in a row, a lengthy evening meeting of the representatives to SAC from each of the four classes negotiated the shape of homecoming week. The events and the schedule were slowly hammered out, with the aid of advisors.

Pep Club was in charge of choosing a theme for homecoming. The planning for the school liturgy, dance and assembly hung on the theme. Pep Club was a club which boosted athletics in various ways, for example by making posters supporting team events. All the members were girls. Agreement on the theme "Reflections in Time"

came slowly at a few noontime Pep Club meetings.

Once the theme was chosen, the liturgy council could begin finding music for the mass; Spanish, French, German, Red Cross clubs met to plan decorations for cars for the parade; freshman, sophomore, etc., classes met during homeroom to plan float-building. The week of homecoming found students working nightly on the floats and after school in classrooms on car decorations.

The band would march in the parade and play at the game, so its preparations began earlier than the last week. The liturgists planned and practiced their music and the celebrant of the mass conferred with them on readings and songs.

Two weeks before the coronation seniors cast a first ballot for the homecoming court. Two more ballots would be taken: one to get the nine senior men and nine senior women who would compose the court and one to pick the second and first attendants and the queen and king.

The school turned upside down by Thursday and Friday. Instead of assignments, bells, lectures being the order of the day--having a good time was dominant. Students came dressed in costumes on spirit day--anything from nuns to 50's boppers to army generals. Teachers follow suit, and laughter, cheering and fun prevailed. Classes met for shortened periods, so that a semblance of work went on.

The spirit assembly consisted of competition among the classes in loudness of cheering and in relay races and tug-of-war. Students

not usually seen on the gym floor as athletes represented the seniors for the tug-of-wars. The roar was deafening. A beloved social studies teacher known for crazy classroom antics led the cheering in his cowboy outfit--complete with pistols, neck kerchief and hat. The teacher had reversed his normal role to become a cheerleader, the secular minister to "school spirit."

Differences and inequalities were banished both in the form of the activities and in the wearing of costumes. The court had been distinguished at the coronation and the colors assembly by their attire--suits and dressy dresses. On spirit day, anyone could come dressed as a military general, as a nun, or in a diaper. The hierarchical order of the social structure was abolished with everyone in costume. The form of the activities was yelling for one's class. Everyone was also equal in this activity. It was the total volume of noise produced which determined who won the spirit award, so everyone's help was necessary. The group, the unity of all, the equal importance of all, was celebrated in the spirit assembly. This ritual stressed activeness--everyone's screaming was important to victory. It stressed form in that the competitions among the classes, loudness of yelling, tug-of-wars and relay races, were traditional.

In this section's descriptions of school rituals, I have tried to show how an all-school liturgy and a spirit assembly offered Christian love and school spirit as factors which temporarily created the ideal unified school community and temporarily relieved

tension of unequal school statuses. Through symbols and explicit statements the problems of greed and injustice were seen to fit into a larger comprehensive view of the world and thus, were made endurable (Geertz, 1973). In the secular realm, the exalting of King, Queen and football players was associated with the greater good of school tradition and also temporarily balanced by equality and unity.

The role of collective ritual in renewing community spirit and life has been noted by many others. Durkheim (1922) saw "ecstatic renewal" and "collective effervescence" subsequent to such rituals. Turner (1969) has examined rituals, as "liminal periods," when "anti-structure" exists. These intense communal times are a source of new social energy. Swidler (1979:88) described rituals as "a kind of psychic fusion reaction."

The content of the ritual communications which I have described messages about being a member of the St. Anne's group. The rites both defined a good member, offered an opportunity to be one, and elicited active re-creation of that definition.

The form that these communications took include all four of Berger and Luckman's (1966:94-95) levels of legitimation. Berger and Luckman outline four forms which rhetorical and legitimating statements take. Thus, symbolic communications reinforced the group perspective.

The first form is "incipient legitimation" in which a commonsense view of the world is communicated through common language. St. Anne's members were referred to as the "St. Anne's family." Teachers "care";

"Student Activities Committee cares." "Care" was a frequently used word which described the correct attitude toward others at St. Anne's. Cheers at the spirit assembly consisting of "seniors, seniors" yelled by everyone in the class were very powerful and uniting. In the colors assembly, classes were also defined and unified by wearing their own class colors: freshmen, blue and white; sophomores, green and white, etc.

The second level of legitimation consists of "theoretical propositions in rudimentary form," such as proverbs, folktales, legends. In the mass the readings provided many such statements: The shrubs will become trees and the trees shrubs. The last shall be first and the first last. The gift of a mustard seed is sufficient. These all expressed a philosophical point of view in a condensed code. They expressed the idea that in smallness there was potential greatness and that in the future the meek and humble would be exalted. In the secular realm the slogans on homecoming floats such as "Angels will stomp Meshana" (their opponent) seemed to act similarly in their mustering up of spirit and competition against the enemy.

The third level of legitimation proceeds through "explicit theories by which an institutional sector is legitimated in terms of a differentiated body of knowledge." Specialists emerge at this level to communicate the knowledge of a group through ritual instruction. The priest's homily at the mass was an example at this level. He interpreted and applied the readings to contemporary existence, so "death" became "bad moods" and shrubs were the quiet,

unassuming, childlike students who would one day be mighty trees. The school philosophy and faculty and student handbooks also operated at this level of legitimation. School structure with its hierarchical authority was another aspect of this more formal category of legitimation.

Finally, the most general level of legitimation involves "symbolic universes" which Berger and Luckman define as "bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a systemic totality." One might find the most abstract and general symbols communicating the St. Anne's world view. The cross was always present at a school mass. It stood for Christ and his death on the cross; Christ was the mediator between the heavenly spirit and human existence. Thus the cross stood for the essence of the Christian myth: Christ through his death mediating between God and humans and resulting in renewed life. The cross was, thus, death and re-birth. The cross obviously stood for self-sacrifice, trusting that one's lack of selfishness would be for a larger good. The banner with a giving hand from which came love was a more explicit example of the cross symbolism. Gift-giving was a form of bond-building (Mauss, 1954) which established mutual social obligations. The all-school cookout on Friday of Homecoming week was another abstract symbol; eating together is always a symbol of unity (Warner, 1959).

One finds that a general attitude including activism, egalitarianism, school spirit, unity, and altruism which defines membership

at St. Anne's was revivified in school rituals through four levels of symbols, from common language to abstract symbols. Symbolic communication and legitimation were thick in the mass and assembly described here. Thus members were bombarded on concrete and abstract levels with the group definition of the situation. Students' behavior was appropriate in both rituals--quiet, betokening reflection, at the mass; enthusiastic, active, involved at the assembly.

These unifying symbols (their meanings) and the hierarchical school order which they legitimated were thus reinforced through these rituals. Tensions which arise through social structural arrangements build up and divide students and may eventually lead them to question the school order. These rituals served to release that tension in establishing a temporary egalitarian spirit of "communitas" (Turner, 1969) among members. The temporary unity built up positive relations between members as it strengthened their common bond through symbols and activities and released negative feelings through intensive physical activity, through role reversals, and through humor.

Sociologists claim that the great structural contradiction of teaching is the need to maintain formal authority and the need to develop emotional ties in the school (Swidler, 1979:56). At St. Anne's and in other denominational schools (Kapferer, 1981) this contradiction is "resolved" through the differentiation of classroom learning and all-school events. Classrooms remain the sphere of formal authority; all-school rituals are the arena for the

development of emotional ties. Through the ritual distinction of time and place, St. Anne's can go far in achieving both affective and instrumental goals, thus being a more effective socializing institution.

This study of a religiously based high school revealed processes of legitimation on a number of levels. Common symbols were explicit in such a school. Such studies may in turn help us in examining public schools where symbols may be more diffuse or general (Young, 1965) or more individual such as those in small peer group affiliations. Such careful interpretations of ritual and dramatic behavior is necessary if we are to begin to understand the symbolic system which legitimates social arrangements and cultural logic in American institutions.

Footnotes

[1] All the proper names in this paper are pseudonyms.

[2] Kapferer (1981) is an exception. She discusses ritual socialization in two private schools in Australia.

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